

Appl. No. 10/622,274
Amdt. Dated March 28, 2005

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

- 1-22. (canceled)
23. (new) A method of compressing and packaging a single unused sanitary absorbent article, the method comprising:
- (a) disposing a single unused sanitary absorbent article within a package, the package comprising a heat shrinkable material;
 - (b) drawing a vacuum within an interior of the package such that portions of the package collapse toward and compress the absorbent article;
 - (c) heating the package to shrink wrap the heat shrinkable material about the absorbent article; and
 - (d) sealing the package to maintain the vacuum within the interior of the package.
24. (new) The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of compressing the absorbent article to reduce the size of the absorbent article prior to said step (a).
25. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein said step (c) is performed prior to said step (d).
26. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein said step (d) is performed prior to said step (c).
27. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein said step (d) is performed during performance of said step (c).
28. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein the package is formed from a tubular sheet of material having an endless wall.
29. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein the package is formed from separate flat panels of material.

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30. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein said step (b) comprises drawing a vacuum on the order of magnitude of hundreds of millibars.
31. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein said step (b) comprises drawing a vacuum at a pressure of about 350 millibars.
32. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein the volume of the absorbent article is reduced by the method by about 30% to about 70%.
33. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein the volume of the absorbent article is reduced by the method by about 40% or more.
34. (new) The method of claim 23, wherein the volume of the absorbent article is reduced by the method by about 55% or more.
35. (new) A packaged absorbent article produced by the method of claim 23.
36. (new) A packaged diaper for a child produced by the method of claim 23.
37. (new) A packaged diaper for an adult produced by the method of claim 23.
38. (new) A method of packaging an absorbent article, the method comprising:
 - (a) disposing an absorbent article within an interior volume defined by a heat-shrinkable material; and
 - (b) heating the heat-shrinkable material thereby shrinking the heat-shrinkable material about the absorbent article;
 - (c) wherein the absorbent article is the only absorbent article disposed within the interior volume defined by the heat shrinkable material;
 - (d) wherein the absorbent article is unsoiled;
 - (e) wherein the absorbent article, prior to packaging, has an uncompressed state; and

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- (f) wherein the absorbent article, after said step (b), has a compressed state that has a lesser volume than that of the uncompressed state.
39. (new) The method of claim 38, wherein said step (b) comprises heating the heat-shrinkable material thereby shrinking the heat-shrinkable material about the absorbent article and reducing the volume of the absorbent article to the compressed state.
40. (new) The method of claim 38, further comprising compressing the absorbent article from the uncompressed state prior to said step (a).
41. (new) The method of claim 38, wherein said step (a) comprises disposing the absorbent article in the compressed state within the interior volume defined by the heat-shrinkable material.
42. (new) The method of claim 41, wherein said step (b) comprises heating the heat-shrinkable material thereby shrinking the heat-shrinkable material about the absorbent article and retaining the absorbent article in the compressed state.
43. (new) A packaged diaper for a child produced by the method of claim 38.
44. (new) A packaged diaper for an adult produced by the method of claim 38.